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SIR WILLIAM MOLESWORTH'S

SPEECH

ON THE

STATE OF THE COLONIES. -

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IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

MARCH 6, 1838,

ON THE

STATE OF THE COLONIES.

LONDON:

T. COOPER, 1, BIRCHIN LANE.

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SPEECH,

&c. &c.

No Member of this House ever more required indulgence than I do on this occasion. The subject which I have undertaken to bring before the House, is of such great importance, and in some respects of so delicate a nature, that I cannot think of it without being forcibly, not to say fearfully, reminded of my own inability to do justice to it—of my inexperience and want of weight in the House. Such a topic in the hands of one who had acquired personal influence with the House, might well stimulate the speaker to exertions which should add to the respect already felt for him; but with me the importance and difficulty of the subject have a contrary effect, and only remind me how necessary it is to bespeak a kind allowance for my deficiencies. It is with this feeling of apprehension for myself that I am anxious to disclaim certain opinions with regard to Colonies, which, I know not why, have been attributed to me, and which are, justly in my humble judgment, unpopular in this House and in the country. I allude to the opinions of those who think that the

best thing, that a mother country can do with her Colonies, is to get rid of them. The saying, "Emancipate your Colonies," means with those who employ it most emphatically, a great deal more than the mere words convey. It is used, by some at least, to express an opinion that a country like this would be better without Colonies, and even that it would have been better for us if we had never had Colonies. From this sentiment, notwithstanding my respect for some who entertain it, I venture to disagree altogether. What! are we to repent of having planted the thirteen English Colonies of North America, which have expanded into one of the greatest, most prosperous, and happiest nations that the world ever saw? Are we to regret that the more northern deserts of the American continent, which constitute her Majesty's possessions in that quarter of the globe, are in the course of being reclaimed, cultivated, and filled with inhabitants of our race, whose industry finds an ample reward, and who, having wants like our own, require objects that are produced here, and thus furnish us with continually increasing markets in which to sell the produce of our domestic industry? Is it a pity that our numerous and profitable markets in the West Indies should ever have existed? Should we despond over our mighty empire in the East, which has brought to us—let those deny it who would deny the shining of the sun at noon—an incalculable tribute of wealth? Is

our extraordinary trade with the infant Colonies of Australasia an evil or a good? Sir, for my part, I can see no necessary evil, but do see vast and inevitable good, in the possession of Colonies. And this is no new opinion of mine, formed by the occasion. Will the House, kindly taking into consideration the disadvantages under which I labour, in having been supposed to agree with those who cry "Emancipate your Colonies," permit me to offer some proofs (and it shall be done very briefly) of the degree to which I have been misrepresented or misunderstood? So long as nearly five years ago—a long period in a short life—I took an active part in the foundation of a Colony in which I feel a deep interest on public grounds, and have proved it by incurring personal risk as a trustee responsible for the safety of considerable funds belonging to the Colony. During last year (long before the revolt in Canada had excited here a new interest in Colonies) I had the honour to become one, along with my Hon. Friend (if he will allow me to call him so) the Member for Thetford, and my Hon. Friends the Members for Lambeth and Caithness, of a Colonial Association whose opinion on the advantages which this country has derived from the possession of Colonies was publicly expressed in the following terms, in which I did then, and do now, most cordially agree:

"At the time when Elizabeth granted to the brother-in-law of Raleigh the first charter for

British colonization, the wants of the people, and even of the Sovereign of England, were confined to objects such as would now be considered fitting for only a half-civilized race. The Queen herself trod upon reeds, fastened her clothes with wooden skewers, and fed upon beef, salt fish, and beer. The richer classes could expend their income from land only in a rude hospitality, which consisted but of quantity without variety, and had no other effect than to support retainers in a rough plenty. Nothing could well be coarser than the food and clothing of the great body of the people. But along with the emigration of Englishmen to distant lands, new productions were discovered and sent home in exchange for products of domestic industry. It was then that we began to be a manufacturing and commercial nation. Who shall estimate the influence upon the industry, not only of England, but of Europe, of the cultivation of sugar, tobacco, and cotton, in America? These are but a few of the many new productions arising from colonization which have gradually, through the stimulus of new desires, so improved the useful arts in England (that of agriculture included), that our population has continually increased, with a continual decrease—the grand test of social advancement—in the proportion of hands employed in raising food for the whole society. Bristol, with her West India trade, Liverpool, with her trans-Atlantic commerce, the modern towns of Lancashire, with their

manufactures of the raw produce of America—what are these but manifest results of British colonization. ‘Ships, colonies, and commerce!’ It is to these that England is chiefly indebted for her pre-eminent wealth, and even for the greatness of our domestic numbers. The old fashion of colonizing was, therefore, a very good one for this country.”

The Noble Lord the Member for Stroud, the Hon. Baronet who may be said to represent in this House the Colonial Department, and the Right Hon. Baronet opposite, know how anxious an interest I, (as Chairman of a Select Committee of this House, whose labours are not yet concluded), have taken in the affairs of New South Wales and Van Diemen’s Land; not confining myself (as I am sure the Noble Lord the Secretary at War will bear me witness) to the subject of transportation, which is the question specifically before the Committee, but sparing no pains to discover by what means the remarkable productive and commercial prosperity of those Colonies may be preserved, when the main cause of that prosperity, a constant and increasing supply of convict labour, shall be abolished for very shame at the continuance of the moral horrors of transportation. Further proofs, Sir, might be adduced, but these, I trust, are enough; more especially as one of the complaints I shall presently have to make against Lord Glenelg is, that practically, in one important respect at least, he has sided with those who deny that it is advantageous to preserve and add to our Colonies.

That opinion, Sir, with respect to the disadvantage of having Colonies, appears to me to have arisen from the want of a distinction, to which I am desirous to draw the attention of some of my Hon. Friends, and especially the Right Hon. Baronet the Member for Dundee. The Right Hon. Baronet, in his work on Financial Reform, has said, "The possession of Colonies affords no advantage which could not be obtained by commercial intercourse with independent states." In like manner Mr. Bentham had said, 50 years before, "There is no necessity for governing or possessing any island in order that we may sell merchandise there." Who can doubt the truth of these propositions, so far as they go? But they do not embrace half the subject; they suppose, or take for granted, that which never existed. They suppose the existence, and the continual increase, of a number of foreign states, whose inhabitants are as skilful in production, and as desirous to obtain British goods, as if they were of our own race and had recently emanated from this country. The doctrine presumes that we could have had the same trade as at present with foreign lands, even though none of our people had gone forth to settle there; that all the countries which we have peopled and converted into growing markets for the sale of our domestic produce would have been just as useful to us, in a commercial point of view, if they had remained "independent states." The independent state of New Holland before we

had planted Colonies there ! The independent state or people of America amongst whom William Penn and his followers settled ! Is not Japan, with which we have no trade, one of the Right Hon. Baronet's " independent states ?" Have we such a trade, or anything like such a trade, with Java as we should have had if we had retained colonial possession of that most fertile country ? The doctrine of the Right Hon. Baronet rests on the assumption that the world abounds in " independent states," able and willing to purchase British goods, and that whatever may be the increase of domestic capital and production requiring new markets, such markets will spring up, just at the moment we want them, in the form of " independent states." Has that assumption any foundation in fact or reason ? I cannot help thinking that it has none—that at all events it is greatly to the advantage of a country like this to plant Colonies, and thereby create markets where none exist or are likely to exist by any other means ; and that this is pre-eminently the policy of such a country as England, whose power of producing wealth by means of manufacture has no other limit than the extent or number of the markets in which she can dispose of manufactured goods. But supposing this admitted, and even admitting another great advantage from colonizing—namely, the outlet which it provides by emigration for a surplus population—still the Hon. Gentlemen who agree with the Right Hon.

Baronet, the Member for Dundee, may contend that there can be no advantage in governing Colonies ; that the sooner we convert them into " independent states," the better for them and for us. The sooner the better ! but when ? Should we, for example, now, at once, confer independence on the last colony founded by England, with its 3,000 inhabitants, giving up to that handful of people the disposal, without the slightest regard to this country, of an enormous extent of unoccupied land, and thus enabling them, if they pleased, to put an end to the whole system of colonization established there, and even to become a slave-holding state, as they would be strongly tempted to do, if they did put an end to that system ? Or should we not rather maintain that act of the Imperial Legislature which gives to the labouring classes of this country, by providing them with a continually increasing means of emigration from low wages to high wages, a property, a sort of inheritance, in the extensive wastes of that Colony ? Should we allow the few who have departed, to forbid the departure of the many who would follow if we do not abandon our dominion over this Colony ? Then again, would it be right to emancipate Upper Canada, where, according to all appearances, the great majority of the people wish to preserve their allegiance to the British Crown ? Surely, Sir, the emancipation of Colonies must be a question of time—a question in each case of special expediency. Might we not

say, too, that it is a question which would seldom or never arise between a Colony and its mother country, if all Colonies were well governed—not less well governed than were the British Colonies of New England before our attack on their chartered rights of local self-government, when they were as loyal, not to say even more loyal—more devoted in their allegiance—than any other portion of the empire?

And this brings me, Sir, to what I imagine has given occasion to the unreasonable cry of “Eman-
cipate your Colonies.” In our possession of Colonies there have been, and still are, abuses and evils enough. Surely it was an abuse of colonial possession to appoint Sir Francis Head Governor of Upper Canada; to give him an opportunity for creating a rebellion by encouraging preparations for it with “folded arms.” And undoubtedly the present state of Lower Canada, the necessity of setting up a garrison government there, of bestowing autocratic powers on an individual (however worthy of confidence he may be)—this surely is an evil arising out of colonial possession. The Canada timber monopoly is a good example both of an abuse and an evil in colonial possession. It would be easy to multiply examples under each head; but how long soever the catalogue should be, would it, I ask, be more striking than the one comprehensive, all-pervading abuse and evil, of subjecting some forty or fifty separate communities to the rule (I

will presently show how it is necessarily irresponsible) of one so incompetent to discharge such arduous and important functions as the present notoriously incompetent Colonial Minister? The abuses and evils of colonization—this is indeed a fertile theme, but it is one upon which I am not inclined to dwell now, except for the purpose of declaring that, in my humble opinion, comparing the abuses and evils with the uses and advantages, the balance has been, and is, greatly in favour of the uses and advantages. Those who cry “Emancipate your Colonies” appear to have seen nothing but the abuses and evils; they have imagined that Colonies and jobbing, colonial trade and colonial monopoly, were synonymous terms. Nor is this to be wondered at, perhaps; for it should be recollected that, until of late years, it was generally and seriously believed that a colonial trade was of no value, unless it was in some way or another a monopoly trade; and secondly, that colonial misgovernment has been far greater and far more obvious in the present generation than it was before. I mean by this to infer that the most enlightened men are apt—and by reason of their hostility to the old system of colonial monopoly—to undervalue and disparage colonial trade itself, confounding the uses with the abuses, which last had got full possession of their minds; and in the next place, that since we lost, by maltreating them, our colonies in North America, and since we set up in Downing-street a Colonial

Office to conquer and to govern the Colonies of other nations ; since, in a word, we abandoned the old system of Chartered Colonies and adopted the new one of Crown Colonies ; since we exchanged our ancient and successful system of colonizing—that of allowing to the colony a large share of local self-government —since we have pursued the Spanish system of governing in all things from a distance by a Council of the Indies in Downing-street, —the government of our Colonies has been far more objectionable, more ignorant, necessarily so on account of the great distance between the subjects and the seat of all authority ; more oppressive, insomuch as local power has been confided to strangers who have no permanent interest in, or sympathy with, the Colony ; and, lastly, more injurious to us at home, by furnishing a larger amount of Government patronage, or, in other words, larger means of Parliamentary corruption. A new dislike to the old system of colonial trade, and an impression made by the new system of colonial government, under which the evils and abuses necessarily belonging to all Governments from a distance had increased and become more obvious—these I believe to be at the bottom of the opinion which condemns as mischievous and absurd the old fashioned, but (as it appears to me) sound opinion which is expressed by the cry “ Ships, colonies, and commerce.” Instead of wishing to separate from our Colonies, or to avert the establishment of new ones, I would say

distinguish between the evil and the good ; remove the evil, but preserve the good ; do not " emancipate your Colonies," but multiply them, and improve—reform your system of colonial government. Sir, I yield to no man in this House in a desire to preserve and extend the colonial empire of England. I wish that our connexion with the United States had not been dissolved ; because one may suppose that, if it had been preserved, slavery in America would have been by this time abolished, and the American tariff would never have existed. While, on the other hand, I rejoice at the separation, it is only because I prefer the lesser evil ; believing that the colonists, after our tyrannical attack on their local constitutional rights, had no choice but between independence and abject submission to our power ; and that the triumph of our tyranny in America would have been a misfortune to the world. It is, Sir, on the same principle, while I wish that our connexion with Lower Canada were more intimate and more friendly than it has ever been, that I hope that the people of that country will either recover the constitution which we have violated, or become wholly independent of us. However strong my impressions may be of the advantages of colonial empire, yet I sincerely trust that I shall ever sympathize with a people struggling for their just rights, and heartily wish them success.

Sir, there is another disadvantage under which

I labour, and from which I hope, with the permission of the House, to relieve myself in a few words. Knowing how distasteful this motion is to some Hon. Members, especially on my own side of the House—aware, of course, of the difficulty which they will have to refute or even to deny a proposition which every one who hears it must acknowledge to be perfectly true, I expect (unless they should take the more prudent course of silence, relying on the Right Hon. Baronet's protection and guardianship when it shall come to the vote), I expect that they may refer to general political opinions which I have avowed in this House and elsewhere, and may endeavour to represent this motion as having democratic objects and tendencies. This would be a way of making the motion unpopular in this House. I will, Sir, however, endeavour to prevent the success of such a manœuvre. I declare, then, that in bringing the subject of our Colonial Administration, and of the qualifications, or rather disqualifications of the Colonial Minister before this House, I have had no regard whatever to any abstract opinions of my own with reference to the best form of government for an old and much-advanced country like this—that I can hardly conceive a greater absurdity than the proposal to set up democratic institutions in all our Colonies—amongst the ignorant and superstitious millions of India—amongst our Negro fellow-subjects in the West Indies, or the convict and once

convict inhabitants of New South Wales, or amongst the motley and not half or even quarter civilized population of our territories in South Africa, or even among the labouring rustics for whom Parliament has provided the means of settling in South Australia, most of whom could not tell you the meaning of the word "democratic" or the word "institution." Sir, I am convinced that the form of government which a Colony should possess must depend upon the special circumstances of the case, and that the sort of constitution which was very good for one Colony might be very bad for another: that some Colonies absolutely require a despotic authority; that for others an aristocratic power may be most suitable; and I doubt much whether amongst all our Colonies there be more than two or three in which I should not be very much afraid to try the experiment of a pure democracy. What is the nature of our government of 100,000,000 of people in India? Fortunately it is not of the nature of Colonial-office government, but it is anything but democratic. Yet I know not if a better could be devised for the people who are subject to it. What would be the state of India if all the public affairs of that country were confided to the neglect of the Colonial-office? I hope some Hon. Gentleman connected with India will tell us how he should like such an arrangement. The House will, therefore, see that the present motion has no concern with,

or relation to, my opinions on government in general, whatever they may be ; that the motion is no more open to the objection of having democratic objects and tendencies than if it had been proposed by the Hon. Baronet the member for Tamworth, and seconded by the Right Hon. Baronet the member for the University of Oxford.

Sir, it may be said that I have singled out the Noble Lord at the head of the Colonial-office for an invidious and spiteful attack ; that he is not more incompetent than some of his colleagues ; that his office has been filled by as incompetent men ; that the whole Cabinet are responsible for neglect of duty in each department of the state ; and that the censure of this House should be directed against them as a body. I am not sure, Sir, but that there may be some force in the last objection to my motion. Let me, however, explain to the House the reasons which have induced me to call upon them for an expression of want of confidence in Lord Glenelg alone. The Colonial-office differs materially from every other branch of the Government. All the other departments of the state administer for us, who are represented in this House ; the Colonial office administers for the Colonies, not one of which is represented in any assembly to which that office is in any degree responsible. The other branches of Government administer only, they do not legislate ; but the Colonial-office, besides having to conduct an

administration comprising all the branches of government, civil, military, financial, judicial, and ecclesiastical—an administration rendered still more difficult by the various institutions, languages, laws, customs, wants, and interests of a great variety of separate and widely different communities—besides all this, which the whole administrative force of this country could hardly manage well—besides an administration more varied and difficult than that of this country, of one race, language, and law—besides this infinite variety of executive functions (as if the executive duties were not sufficiently complicated and incongruous) the Colonial-office has further to legislate more or less for all the Colonies, and altogether for those Colonies which have no representative assembly, by means either of instructions to governors, or of orders in Council, or by appointing and instructing some or all of the branches of the Colonial Legislature. Such a complication of functions in a single office would be bad enough if all the Colonies were close together, and close to England. Let us recollect, however, how widely they are dispersed, and how far from Downing-street is the Colony which is nearest to England. As to most of them several months, and some of them a whole year, must elapse before a letter between the Government and one of its subjects can be answered by return of post. A petition arrives here; who is there to press its prayer on the attention of the

Colonial Minister?—who is there to take care that it shall be even read by him? Whether he ever looks at it must depend on the degree of his diligence, and of his interest in the Colony whence it comes. Orders dispatched hence should be adapted, not to the state of things which existed in the Colony at the date of the Minister's last advices therefrom, but to that which he may conjecture will exist when his orders arrive. How can he fail to err without the highest sagacity and foresight? Besides, in many cases, the very subject of the letter, or petition, or remonstrance, may be worn out before he can even know of its existence. Whatever the difficulties, then, of both legislating and administering for so many different communities, all these are enhanced a thousandfold by the great distance between the subjects and the Government. Let us further reflect, Sir, that in addition to all these most arduous functions, we impose upon the Colonial-office no small portion of the task of suppressing the prosperous and increasing slave-trade with Africa, and also a branch of criminal jurisprudence in the administration of a secondary punishment at the antipodes. Forgetting one-half of the duties of the Colonial-office, still it must be at once admitted that the place of Colonial Minister should never be held but by a person in the very highest degree qualified for public affairs; by the most diligent, the wisest, the most careful and assiduous, the most active and energetic member of the Cabinet;

that the Colonial Minister stands out from the rest of the Cabinet, overcharged with the most arduous duties, incurring obligations the most difficult to perform, eminently, might we not say, if we had any regard for our Colonies, peculiarly subject to the interference of this House, and bound by every sense of public and private virtue, if he find himself incompetent to the task which he has rashly undertaken, to resign his office into abler hands? I do not now speak of Lord Glenelg, but of any and every Colonial Minister. It is only on account of the peculiar nature of his office that censure of any incompetent individual who may fill it seems to me peculiarly the duty of this House: it is an office the performance of whose duties depends far more than in any other branch of Government upon the qualities of the individual by whom the office is held. In every other department of the State the Minister is responsible to this House, where the representatives of conflicting interests have the strongest motives to keep anxious and vigilant watch over the details of his conduct, and unnecessary delay and inactivity are exposed to constant reproach. Though the Minister be not the most distinguished of statesmen, nor possess personal qualities of a superior description, yet his crude and imperfect notions may be improved in this House by the suggestions of his friends and the corrections of his opponents. This can seldom take place in colonial affairs, except where some grave and

extraordinary event, such for instance as a rebellion in one of the Colonies, calls public attention to the subject. In ordinary cases this House, in which the Colonies have no direct representatives, and few persons thoroughly acquainted with the particulars of colonial affairs, can exercise no control over the details of the Colonial-office. In the Cabinet, the affairs of the other departments of the State are more or less within the cognizance of all the members of the Cabinet, and each Minister, in his separate department, may be supposed to be responsible to the whole body; this cannot possibly be the case with regard to the Colonial Minister, whose department embraces all the branches of Government of our numerous and widely remote dependencies, with the details of whose affairs it is utterly impossible for his colleagues to be acquainted. Sometimes, indeed, we find that the head of another department comes down to this House, and makes a speech on Colonial affairs; but every one who understands the subject, and listens to the discourse, can easily perceive that it is got up from a brief. In the Colonial-office, where it is so hard to do well, or even to avoid doing ill—over the details of which this House can exercise no control, in which, consequently, the Minister is completely irresponsible as to details, personal qualities are all in all. If Parliament will not alter the system which imposes so much upon one person—which gives to that person so great a

power for good or evil, it is at least the duty of Parliament to take care that that office is not filled by one of the most incompetent members of the Government. I repeat that this motion is not directed against Lord Glenelg as Lord Glenelg; that it has no object of personal hostility against him; and if he appear to be singled out for attack from the rest of the Administration, that has occurred, not from any malignant or even ungenerous feeling towards him, but simply because the branch of Government at the head of which he has had the misfortune of being placed, is the only one which absolutely requires, for the decent performance of its duties, qualities which the Noble Lord does not possess. I merely assume, Sir, for the present, that he does not possess them; I shall soon come to the proof of that part of the case.

But, on the other hand, there are Hon. Members on this side of the House who may possibly object to an expression of a want of confidence in Lord Glenelg, on the ground, that if the House should agree to my motion, they would indirectly censure the Government of Lord Melbourne. Hon. Members may even say, that under the disguise of affirming a truism with regard to Lord Glenelg, I am endeavouring to undermine the Government, and, to use their own most patriotic phraseology, "let in the Tories." I at once admit, that the House cannot agree to my motion without censuring the whole Cabinet, who ought to be responsible, not

for the particular acts or neglects of Lord Glenelg, but for his continuance in office after the late conspicuous events have so amply demonstrated his incompetency ; but I deny the supposed charge of disguise ; and in order to satisfy the House that there is no disguise in the matter, I have no hesitation in declaring, that I for one should feel no regret if this motion should result in giving us a better Cabinet as well as a better Colonial Minister. Suppose the Cabinet dissolved by a vote of this House on colonial affairs, does it follow that the Tories would obtain power ? It would not be as Tories, at all events. I do not believe, Sir, that we shall ever again have a government acting upon Tory principles, except under circumstances like the present, when a government professing liberality adopts Tory principles in order to retain office. If the Tories were under the responsibility of office, they would be as liberal as the country ; they would be controlled by the opposition, just as the present government is controlled, the only difference being, that whereas the guiding opposition is at present Tory, it would then be liberal. That, Sir, would be better than the present state of things ; and even better than that might happen, unless we are to conclude that the liberal party has been so degraded and weakened by its submission to the Tories, that her Majesty would find it impossible to form a vigorous and self-relying liberal administration, if the present Ministers were to let go their

grasp of power. Sir, expecting that insidious motives should be imputed to me, I think it best frankly to state to the House what I feel about the government; but let me hope that my frankness on this head will obtain for me the confidence of the House, when I declare, that in submitting this motion to them, I am no more actuated by hostility to the Ministry than by personal hostility to Lord Glenelg. I cannot be blind to the possible result of such a motion being carried; but, as far as I am concerned, such a result will be merely incidental or accidental. I have not had it in view—that is not my object. My only object, whatever may perchance or possibly happen besides, is to relieve the colonies from an imbecile and mischievous administration of their affairs—to bring before the House, at a moment when they will give attention to such a subject, the critical state of many of our colonies, in various parts of the world—and to establish, for a time at least, some sort of responsibility in the Colonial-office. Are these proper objects, supposing the proposition contained in my motion to be true? All turns, I think, upon the truth of that proposition.

Whether or not the proposition be true depends on the answer to certain questions:—Are not many of our Colonies in various parts of the world in a condition which requires a more than usually wise and vigorous Colonial Minister? Does not the colonial empire at present exhibit peculiar diffi-

culties and dangers? Is there not at this moment, more than at any previous time, a pressing necessity for placing at the head of colonial affairs a statesman on whose diligence, forethought, judgment, activity, and firmness this House and the country may be able to rely? Is not the present Colonial Minister—has he not proved it by his acts—peculiarly unfit to deal with the peculiar difficulties belonging to the present state of the Colonies? These are the questions which I beg of the House to examine and to decide upon; and I will now proceed to state the grounds upon which I am led to believe that the conscience of every Member of the House will answer every one of these questions in the affirmative.

In bringing before the House the critical condition of several of the Colonies, and the peculiar neglect of that critical state by the present Colonial Minister, it matters but little with what Colony one should begin. Every quarter of the globe furnishes a case strongly illustrative of the positions contained in my motion. But we must commence somewhere. I will begin with a case as to which I can appeal for the confirmation of some of my statements to several Hon. Gentlemen; amongst others to the Hon. Gentleman the Member for Newark, and the Right Hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth. During the last session of the last Parliament, the House instituted an inquiry into the state of our penal Colonies in Australia. The

committee has been revived this session. The disclosures made before the committee represent a state of things which it was hard, even for those who heard the representation, to credit. Not that there could be any doubt either of the knowledge or of the veracity of the witnesses examined, but that they described a state of society, a degree of moral contamination, a condition of national infamy, so revolting, that one was loth to believe in the existence of such horrors. The evidence taken before the committee of last year is in the possession of Hon. Gentlemen. No one, I think, who has examined that evidence can doubt, that whatever have been the evils attending upon planting Colonies with convicts, those evils have of late years greatly augmented, and have just now attained a pitch which requires some prompt, vigorous, and comprehensive remedy. Is not the Right Hon. Baronet opposite of this opinion? The first step to a remedy was ample inquiry. The House will perhaps imagine that the Colonial Minister had some part in the inquiry which has taken place; that it was suggested by him; that he was sufficiently acquainted with the great and growing evils in question to have proposed such an inquiry in Parliament. Not at all! On the contrary, the country is solely indebted for that inquiry to the Noble Lord the Member for Stroud, from whom, before I moved for a committee, I had the good fortune to obtain a promise that the motion should have his support

in the House. Considering the colonial nature of the subject, why did I not, in order to obtain the sanction of Government, address myself to the Noble Lord at the head of colonial affairs? Simply, because I believed that such an application would be in vain. I was afraid of the proverbial indecision and supineness of that Minister; and I believed that the only sure mode of obtaining an inquiry on this colonial subject, was to pass by the Colonial Minister, and apply to another Minister whose department is eminently not colonial. My opinion of the Colonial Minister may have been erroneous; but it was formed on common report and belief; and the fact therefore is, that so far as I am concerned, the important information as to New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, now before the House, would not have been obtained if I had not made bold, in seeking a colonial inquiry, to proceed as if there were no such department as that over which Lord Glenelg presides. Sir, if I had wanted any justification for such a course, I should find it in another proceeding, or rather neglect of Lord Glenelg's, with regard to New South Wales.

While the moral and social corruption of that Colony exceeds belief, its economical prosperity is equally remarkable. Nothing can be more clearly established by the evidence taken before the transportation committee, than the fact that both the evil and the good have one and the same cause—

namely, a regular and increasing supply of convict labourers. If the stream of convict emigration be stayed, the source of the economical prosperity will be dried up, unless indeed some other means be adopted of supplying the Colony with labourers. Amongst those most conversant with the subject, there is but one opinion as to the evils which arise from supplying the Colonies with labour by means of transportation—but one opinion as to the necessity, if the Colony is to be saved from ruin, of promoting the emigration of free labourers. The means too of promoting emigration exist to an almost incredible extent; they were called into existence by the Noble Lord the Secretary at War, when he was Under Secretary for the Colonies in the year 1831. The Noble Lord's regulations for the disposal of waste lands in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land (which did not take effect until the year 1832) have actually produced an emigration fund amounting to about £400,000. sterling; and persons, on whose experience and judgment the greatest reliance may be placed, estimate the future revenue from the sale of waste lands at £200,000. a year in New South Wales alone. Here, then, are abundant means of supplying the Colony with a substitute for convict labour. Now, what has Lord Glenelg done with this vast emigration fund? He allowed a portion of it to be placed at the disposal of a private society, who expended the public money in sending out to the Colony shipload after

shipload of the most abandoned and irreclaimable prostitutes. He placed another portion of it at the disposal of one Mr. John Marshall, a sort of agent or broker for shipping, who performs (without any responsibility) for the Colonial-office the difficult functions of conducting emigration with the public money of the Colony. But this is not all ; only a portion of this vast emigration fund has been applied, however improperly, to its proper purpose. The remainder, amounting to no less a sum than £200,000., is locked up in the public chest at Sydney, lying idle, of no use whatever, although the demand for labour is more urgent than at any previous time, and the Colonists have vehemently prayed that the money which they paid for land may be expended according to the conditions on which they paid it. And this sum in the public chest is not only useless, but it is worse than useless ; for since ready money was paid for the land, a great part of the currency of the Colony is thus absorbed and locked up in the Government chest. The loud and frequent complaints of the Colonists on this subject have fallen upon the ear of the Noble Lord as if he were stone deaf. This, Sir, after transportation, about the horrors of which the Noble Lord seems to have known nothing until they were brought to light by the committee of inquiry, even if he knows anything about them now—this is a subject of the deepest importance to the Penal Colonies ; and what attention has the

Noble Lord paid to this important question of free emigration by means of the sale of waste lands? None whatever! But has he no excuse for his total neglect of this important and urgent colonial subject? I would put the question to my Hon. Friend, the Member for Sheffield, who, in the session of 1836, presided with uncommon ability over a committee of this House, by which this subject was most carefully examined, and which committee strongly recommended the adoption of a system for giving complete and permanent effect to Lord Howick's regulations, as they are properly termed—I ask the Hon. Gentleman the Member for Newark, who took a very prominent and very valuable part in that inquiry, what notice has the Noble Lord taken of the labours of the committee? None whatever. The Noble Lord has treated the report of the committee as if it were so much waste paper; and I am not surprised at it, for I believe that the inquiry of 1836 concerning waste lands and emigration was obtained, like the inquiry on transportation, without any assistance from the Noble Lord, by the aid of another Minister, as if in truth there were no such Minister as the Noble Lord at the head of the Colonial Department. I am not therefore the only Member of this House who, in seeking for information on a very important colonial subject, has passed by the Colonial Minister as if there were no such person in existence.

There is another fact, Sir, as to New South

Wales, from which the people of that Colony might be justified in inferring that there really is no such person in existence as the Colonial Minister—that Lord Glenelg is a merely, imaginary personage, a nominal being, without functions to perform, or at least without capacity to perform them. For many years New South Wales has been governed by an act which expired in the year 1836. That act established a temporary system and form of government—a system and form of government suited to the time when the act passed ; that is, when the majority of the inhabitants of the Colony were convicts under punishment. Need I add that this system of provisional government was (necessarily under the circumstances) of a most despotic character ; that it neglected altogether the principle of representation, and gave to the colonists no voice whatever in the management of their own affairs ? But since then the circumstances of the Colony have altogether changed. The free colonists have become the majority. Those free colonists, naturally desirous to obtain some of the rights of Englishmen, have looked forward with the deepest anxiety to the period when the New South Wales Act would expire—to the time when Parliament would have to legislate anew on the subject ; and when they might hope that Parliament, in framing a constitution for a free people, would bestow on them some degree of representation, and give them some voice in the management of their own local

affairs. To the colonists of New South Wales, therefore, 1836 was a most important year. Was the Noble Lord, the Colonial Minister, prepared for this very important colonial occasion? Did he submit to Parliament a new constitution for the Colony? No; he only asked Parliament to renew the old act for one year. But in 1837 it will be supposed, when this act of a twelvemonth would have expired, that the Noble Lord was prepared. Not a bit of it! In 1837 he again asked for and obtained the renewal of the old act for another twelvemonth. But, perhaps, it may be said that the Noble Lord believed that the Colony was not ripe for any other than the old despotic constitution, and that he acted deliberately in renewing the old act from year to year. Not at all, Sir; for on both occasions the Under Secretary for the Colonies, acting undoubtedly on behalf of his chief, gave notice of his intention to propose an entirely new act for the government of the Colony. On both occasions, no doubt, the Noble Lord intended to relieve the colonists of New South Wales from their anxiety on a subject which must ever be one of the deepest interest to freemen; but on both occasions he only exhibited his own infirmity of purpose. Is he prepared this year? or are we to renew the old act for the third time? Are we for the third time to tell the free people of this Colony that we care so little about them as to neglect altogether a matter about which they care above all things? And if we do so, are we to wonder at their resentment?

Here, then, Sir, as respects one Colony, are three great questions, urgently pressing on the unwilling attention of the Noble Lord. First, a remedy for the terrible evils of transportation; secondly, a means of saving the Colony from economical ruin; and, thirdly, a new constitution for the Colony. Each of these questions is rendered more difficult by the Noble Lord's neglect of it hitherto. If we are to judge by the past, what are we to expect for the future?

As respects New South Wales, I have only to add further, that this is one of the several Colonies of which the Governors have recently resigned, or been recalled, on account of differences between those Governors and the department over which Lord Glenelg so neglectfully presides.

In the neighbourhood of our penal Colonies there exist circumstances which, whilst they call for prompt and vigorous action from the Colonial Minister, strongly exhibit Lord Glenelg's inattention and neglect. I allude to the state of many islands in the South Seas, whose inhabitants are subjected to every species of evil from the lawless residence amongst them of British subjects, and especially of convicts who have escaped from our penal settlements. The islands of New Zealand afford the most striking example both of an urgent necessity for some comprehensive measure of prevention, and of Lord Glenelg's carelessness. And here again I may refer to a committee of this House

—the committee on Aborigines, which in 1836 collected very conclusive evidence on the subject, and of which the Under-Secretary for the Colonies, was a member. It appears from the evidence before that committee, and from other documents recently laid on the table of the House, that not less than 2,000 British subjects have settled in New Zealand; that so many as 200 of them are absconded convicts; that they are not subject to any law or authority; that they do exactly what pleases them; that they have pleased to commit crimes towards the natives, at which humanity shudders; and that, in fact, the native race is rapidly disappearing before them. It is in evidence that our lawless fellow-subjects have excited the native tribes to wars and massacres in order to obtain tattooed heads as an article of commerce; that they have taught the natives to employ corrosive sublimate in poisoning their enemies, and have actually sold them that poison for the purpose; that these outcasts from British society have taken an active part in the cruel slaughters of one tribe by another; that they have introduced the use of ardent spirits and of fast-destroying disease; and that, as a natural consequence, “the natives are swept off” in a ratio which promises at no very distant period to leave the country destitute of a single aboriginal inhabitant.” The last statement I have given in the very words of Mr. Busby, an officer of the colonial department, who resides in New Zealand, for no

other purpose, it would appear, than that of writing accounts of these enormities for the use (should I not rather say for the utter neglect?) of Lord Glenelg. He says further, "District after district has become void of its inhabitants, and the population is even now but a remnant of what it was in the memory of some European residents." Now, is this a case of urgency? Is this a matter to be slept over for years, until the native race shall have disappeared altogether?

And further I venture to ask the Right Hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade, whether he has not received a memorial, signed by a large number of the merchants and shipowners of London, trading to the South Seas, representing that unless prompt measures be taken to establish British authority in New Zealand, it is fully to be expected that the lawless British settlers in that country will become a piratical community like the bucaniers of old; and that even now the greatest danger is to be apprehended to our shipping? What has the Noble Lord, who should have been most conversant with this evil and this danger—what has he done, either on behalf of the natives of New Zealand or of our shipping in the South Seas? What has he proposed? What has he thought of? He has done—proposed—thought of—absolutely nothing! If it had been a matter in the moon, he could not have been more careless about it.

The next Colony to which I will refer is the Mauritius. Last year the state of that Colony was brought under the consideration of this House on a motion for a committee of inquiry. Various facts, proving the very disturbed condition of the Mauritius, were stated by an Honourable Gentleman intimately acquainted with the subject—I mean the learned civilian, the member for the Tower Hamlets. Those statements were not contradicted by any one. To this high and unquestionable authority I shall now appeal for the facts I am about to mention. He said, “The most extraordinary circumstances have been detailed to me, (and they are not yet denied) as to the conduct, or rather misconduct, of various governors of the island of Mauritius, and as to the administration of justice, or rather its maladministration there.” “Since the year 1810 there has been in that colony a perpetual violation of the statute law of the land. Upwards of 20,000 felonies have been committed (as admitted by Sir G. Murray), and remain unpunished, without one solitary exception; and up to the present hour these wrongs remain unredressed.” The slave trade has been carried on in opposition to the law. When, from time to time, this country has applied to the French Government to enforce the provisions of the act for the abolition of the slave trade, “France,” said the Honourable Gentleman, “taunted us by saying, that our power was defied and our laws evaded by our own colonists.

This opposition to the law prevailed up to the present hour; it has existed in its most malignant form for the last three or four years. I will not consent to throw the veil of oblivion over the conduct of those who avow their crimes and boast of their impunity. What has been the history of the last four years? Treason has been triumphant in the Mauritius; thousands of colonists have been banded in arms against the domination and power of England; manifestoes have been published throughout the colony, in which the wretches who indicted them dared to say that the time had come when assassination—assassination by the sword, by poison, or by fire, was to be justified. This has been the state of the Mauritius—these the crimes which have been raging.” He likewise asserted that “20,000 individuals, who were as much entitled to their freedom as any man in this House, have been kept for the last fifteen years, contrary to both law and justice, in a state of the most cruel slavery.” These are a few of the facts adduced by the learned civilian when he demanded last year an inquiry into the state of the Mauritius. The refusal of that inquiry, he said, would be “a triumph to those who have hitherto rebelled against the British Government, and hopeless misery and despair to those who have been the victims for so many years of this cruel persecution. The free coloured people of the Mauritius, a very numerous and intelligent body, a deputation of whom have come to this

country to seek for justice and inquiry at the hands of a British House of Commons, will sink into despair if inquiry be denied, and they are told to place themselves again at the mercy of those from whom they have already experienced so much injustice and oppression. This deputation will go back believing that they and those whom they represent are devoted victims of the other party." A similar tone was taken by my Honourable Friend, the member for Liskeard. Notwithstanding the eloquent complaints, the friendly entreaties of these Honourable Gentlemen, the inquiry was denied; and I feel justified in asserting that the state of the Mauritius is most critical.

What has Lord Glenelg done, proposed, thought of, with a view to the critical state of the Mauritius? If information on the subject were required by this House, the return, I fear, would be "*nil*!" It matters not where the emergency may exist, or how great it may be, in every case where decision, activity, energy, is especially required, there we shall find, not that the Noble Lord has done more than in other cases, but only that his inactivity and supineness are the more to be deprecated and regretted.

The next Colony to whose critical—might I not say deplorable?—state I would wish, Sir, to call your attention is our settlement in Southern Africa, at the Cape of Good Hope—a territory larger than the whole of the mother country. It was once in-

habited by numerous aborigines, rich in flocks and herds; by the Hottentots and the far superior race of the Caffres. The natives have nearly disappeared; partly massacred, partly driven from their native country; even now the system of destruction is going on, and in proportion as our frontiers are extended the native tribes are swept away. Sir, I can appeal to the labours of a committee of this House, the committee on aborigines, for a confirmation of my statement. "Any travellers," say they, "who may have visited the interior of this colony little more than twenty years ago, may now stand on the heights of Albany, or in the midst of a district of 42,000 square miles, on the west side of Graaf Reinet, and ask the question, 'Where are the aboriginal inhabitants of the district, which I saw here on my former visit to this country?' without any one being able to inform him where he is to look for them to find them." What, I ask, has become of them? They have perished. They were generally exterminated by those execrable military expeditions, commenced by the Dutch, continued by the English, which are termed commandoes. Another cause of the destruction of the natives is the interminable wars occasioned by the stealing of cattle. The colonists, on the most futile pretexts, have frequently carried off the cattle of the natives. The natives, deprived of the means of subsistence, must either perish or rob. If they rob the whites, they are exterminated by the commandoes; if they

rob their weaker neighbours, these again, thus left to starve, must rob those beyond them or perish. Thus the first robbery by our colonists has given rise to a succession of robberies and native wars which have desolated the most central parts of the continent of Africa. One of the witnesses examined before the aborigines committee says, "It must be obvious that there can be no other limits to the baneful effects of such a system than those which nature may have imposed by seas or natural boundaries; and it is to be feared that the evil increases as it rolls from one part of this ill-fated continent to another. The mischief we now deprecate is, of all the mischiefs which have attended the slave trade, the greatest, and there is not in the centre of Africa at this moment a fragment of society that has not been dashed to pieces against another by the capture of cattle in the wars which have originated in the attempts to procure slaves." Thus, Sir, our colonists are producing in Southern Africa, by seizing the cattle of the natives, evils similar to the worst of those created in central Africa by the slave trade. Besides these evils, which have long existed, and for which it may be difficult to find an adequate remedy at the present moment, the most extraordinary events are taking place in the Colony, which prove the inability and feebleness of the Colonial Government. A formidable body of Cape boors, amounting in number, according to the statement of their leader, to no

less than 900 armed and disciplined men, carrying along with them their wives and children, sheep, cattle, waggon, household stuff, and farming utensils, have left the Colony and set our authority at defiance. Some few of this party alone carried along with them 91,000 sheep and 3,200 head of horned cattle. Their object is to cross the country of the Caffres, and fight their way, if needs be, to Port Natal, in the Zoolah country, a settlement on the eastern coast, several hundred miles distant from the frontier of the Colony, purchased from the Zoolah King, where about 3000 persons, whites and blacks, are now established. This settlement was long unrecognized; I know not whether it is even now recognized by the Colonial-office. The settlers there have denied their allegiance to this country, and they have rejected our agent with impunity. To this point the wandering horde to which I have alluded are now directing their steps, if they have not already reached their destination. They have had the fiercest encounters with the natives, and in ranged battle with one of the native chiefs they have slaughtered at the lowest computation 400 of his followers. The reasons for this strange migration are stated by the leader in a letter to the governor, dated Sand River, 21st July, 1837: he says, "The undersigned conductor and chief of the united encampments hereby humbly sheweth, that as subjects of the British Government we in

our depressed circumstances repeatedly represented our grievances to His Majesty's Government, but in consequence of finding all our efforts to obtain redress fruitless, we at length resolved to abandon the land of our birth, to avoid making ourselves guilty of any act which might be construed into strife against our own Government; that this abandonment of our country has occasioned us incalculable losses; but that, notwithstanding all this, we cherish no animosity towards the English nation. That, in accordance with this feeling, commerce between us and the British merchants, will, on our part, be freely entered into and encouraged, with the understanding, however, that we are acknowledged as a free and independent people." Their object, according to resolutions adopted by them at Caledon, on the 14th of August, 1837, is "to establish a settlement on the same principles of liberty as those adopted by the United States of America, carrying into effect, as far as practicable, their burgher laws." No one can tell what disastrous commotions may be produced by this Tartar horde of wandering boors. The sanguinary conflicts which have already taken place are but precursors of fresh and deadly struggles, and hapless the lot of the miserable natives who become subject to these bold and determined men, merciless to their despised fellow-beings. The system of colonial government which has produced these results is well and briefly summed up

before the aborigines committee by one of the witnesses, in the following terms :—" It gives satisfaction to neither party on the frontier ; the colonists complain that Government affords them neither protection nor redress, that they are always insecure and always sufferers : the Caffres, on the other hand, represent the whole system as founded on false principles, and stained with injustice and cruelty to them ; and the impartial observer soon becomes satisfied that both parties have ground for discontent and alarm."

Here then, Sir, we have an important Colony completely disorganised. The extermination of the natives is rapidly proceeding. Part of the colonists are in open rebellion, or have wandered into the deserts to escape from British authority. Discontent prevails on all sides. Whatever the differences amongst her Majesty's subjects there, each party complains of the Government ; no party is attached to the British Crown. Do I blame Lord Glenelg for this most unhappy state of things ? By no means. The present deplorable condition of Southern Africa has been occasioned by our system, or rather total want of a system, of Government. For this Lord Glenelg is not particularly to blame ; but see what the want of a system has produced ; observe in how very miserable and critical a state the Colony is at last ; and then, Sir, let us decide whether it be not high time to adopt some system of government there ; to apply a remedy of some sort for such cry-

ing evils? Sir, would an assiduous and energetic Colonial Minister have allowed such evils to grow to such a pitch without proposing some kind of remedy for them? Can we expect any efficient remedy from the infirm hands of Lord Glenelg? If not, and if the House really care at all about this important Colony, then will they agree to my motion; and more especially if they should be of opinion that there are many Colonies besides those already mentioned, whose peculiarly critical state at this moment calls for more than average energy, diligence, and wisdom, in the head of the Colonial Government. I should have added, that the Governor of this Colony has just been recalled. That makes two: we shall soon come to more.

I proceed, then, to another Colony, whose condition is more than usually embarrassing and troublesome—the anti-slave-trade Colony of Sierra Leone. Far be it from me, Sir, to cast a shadow of blame on Lord Glenelg for the total failure of this Colony as a means, which it was intended to be, of checking the Slave Trade. Nor is it any reproach to Lord Glenelg that we have lavished millions after millions upon establishing a settlement which appears to have had no other result than a profuse expenditure of public money and human life. The misgovernment of this Colony is proverbial. The speculation, the lavish expenditure, the public plunder, for which it has been notorious, have given it so bad a name, that it may be aptly designated as one

enormous job. Now, if I am not mistaken, the Governor of that Colony has just been recalled; has been driven away from the Colony by the jobbers and speculators who fatten there on the spoil of the public. And, in order that my statement on this subject may be easily corrected if it be erroneous, I will address it in the form of a question to those who are best acquainted with the facts. I would ask the Right Hon. Gentleman, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he did not, when occupying Lord Glenelg's present office, appoint the present Governor of Sierra Leone, selecting him on account of his upright, straightforward, and energetic character, as a person well qualified to bring about some reform in that great job in the shape of a Colony? Did not the gentleman in question proceed to Sierra Leone as a Reformer? A Reformer in Sierra Leone! The fate of such a monster need not be told. The reforming Governor of Sierra Leone, though he was eminently successful in attaching and conciliating the natives in the neighbourhood, soon gave offence to the small band of official jobbers who call themselves the Colony, and was removed accordingly! If the Hon. Baronet, the Member for Devonport, object to my statement, let him move for copies of the correspondence between the Colonial-office and the late Governor. If that were done, the House would see that Sierra Leone is another case of colonial trouble and difficulty for which Lord Glenelg is responsible, but for

which it is not to be expected that Lord Glenelg will provide a remedy.

This, Sir, is the third recent case of a Governor's removal on account of differences with Lord Glenelg's department. Let me now mention a fourth—that of the new Colony of South Australia, whose Governor, appointed by Lord Glenelg not more than 18 months ago, has been just recalled. I have no doubt that this recall may be justified, just like that of Sir F. B. Head; but if so, how does Lord Glenelg justify the appointment? and have not the appointment and the recall together placed the Colony in that state which is sometimes called a state of "hot water?" If we add to these four the resignation of Lord Gosford and the recall of Sir Francis B. Head, there will be no less than six recent cases of the removal of a colonial chief magistrate for extraordinary causes, and under circumstances of extraordinary difficulty and trouble for the Colony. Here are six gentlemen at least who have cause to rue the day when they became subordinates of Lord Glenelg—Sir Richard Bourke, Sir Benjamin D'Urban, Major Henry Campbell, Captain Hindmarsh, Lord Gosford, and Sir Francis Bond Head. Here are six Colonies at least in a state of "hot water." Surely, Sir, my proposition as to the critical state of the Colonies and the incompetency of Lord Glenelg cannot but be true. But let us proceed to further proofs and illustrations.

Our slave colonies—no, our apprentice colonies—

in the West Indies, great and small, insular and continental, Crown and Chartered, present a wide and very productive field of trouble, embarrassment, and danger. Sir, in alluding to them, I shall confine myself to subjects which come strictly within the terms of my present motion, being of peculiar urgency at the present time; nor shall I dwell on all of those subjects. The subject of the gross violation of the Emancipation Act has been exhausted in the other House of Parliament, and Lord Glenelg, though rather late in the day to be sure, has promised to submit to Parliament a measure for giving us that which we thought we had purchased by £20,000,000 of redemption-money. I would ask what the Colonial Minister has done, or proposed, or thought of, in respect to two other matters belonging to West Indian affairs, which, if he possessed the faculty of attention, would urgently require its exercise. I allude to precautions against the time, now very near at hand, when there will be an end to all compulsory labour in the West Indies, and when the negro inhabitants of our chartered colonies will claim the right and the power to elect negro members to the local parliaments. So long ago as in January, 1836, Lord Glenelg, or some other person writing in his name, seems to have been struck with the great importance of the former of these subjects, and even to have devised a sufficient means of preventing the apprehended evil. In a circular of that date, ad-

dressed to the Governors of His Majesty's possessions in the West Indies, Lord Glenelg said, or was made to say—"It must not be forgotten that the conditions under which society has hitherto existed will, on the expiration of the apprenticeship, undergo an essential change. During slavery, labour could be compelled to go wherever it promised most profit to the employer. Under the new system it will go wherever it promises most profit to the labourer. If, therefore, we are to keep up the cultivation of the staple productions, we must make it the immediate and apparent interest of the negro population to employ their labour in raising them. There is reason to apprehend that at the termination of the apprenticeship this will not be the case. Where there is land enough to yield an abundant subsistence to the whole population in return for slight labour, they will probably have no sufficient inducement to prefer the more toilsome existence of a regular labourer, whatever may be its remote advantages, or even its immediate gains. Should things be left to their natural course, labour would not be attracted to the cultivation of exportable products, until population began to press upon the means of subsistence, and the land failed (without a more assiduous and economical culture) to supply all its occupants with the necessaries of life." "In order to prevent this, it will be necessary to prevent the occupation of Crown lands by persons not possessing a proprietary title to them, and to fix such

a price upon Crown lands as may place them out of the reach of persons without capital." Here a great danger is plainly indicated, and the means of prevention as clearly pointed out. The danger is, that the whole of the labouring population of the West Indies should, as soon as they become entirely free, refuse to work for wages—should set up, each one by and for himself, on his own piece of land; and that thus capitalists should be left without labourers, to the certain ruin of the industry of those Colonies. Sir, I, for one, have no doubt that in all those Colonies where land is excessively cheap, the apprehensions of the Noble Lord will be fully realized; but along with the expression of his fears, the Colonial Minister suggested a measure of prevention. "It will be necessary," he says, "to fix such a price upon Crown lands as will place them out of the reach of persons without capital;" and this plan of preserving labour for hire by means of rendering the acquisition of waste land more difficult, was strongly recommended to Parliament by the Committee to which I have referred. As the plan could be of no use whatever unless adopted some time before the total emancipation of the apprentices, it will be supposed that the Noble Lord has followed up his important dispatch by proposing some general and efficient measure founded on his own views and those of the Committee in question. By no means; the subject remains just where his dispatch

left it in January, 1836 ; as if, notwithstanding its great importance, it had fairly slipped from the memory of the Noble Lord. Is this a case of culpable neglect? I appeal to the Hon. Gentleman, the Member for Newark, than whom no member of this House is better acquainted with the subject; but to this case of culpable neglect I have now to add one, in reference to the same subject, of culpable activity, if the term "activity" may be applied to any proceeding of the Noble Lord.

The planters are impressed, as was the Noble Lord, in January, 1836, with the necessity of taking some precaution against the year 1840, as respects the supply of labouring hands. They have devised a new kind of slavery, and a new kind of slave trade; and this invention the Noble Lord has, by an Order in Council, dated the 12th July, 1837, fully sanctioned. This Order in Council authorizes the planters of Demerara to import into that Colony to serve as labourers—"indentured labourers" I believe is the term employed—what class of people does the House imagine? Englishmen or other Europeans who might assert their rights as "indentured labourers?" No. Freed Negroes from the United States, who, being of the same race, and speaking the same language as the present colonial population of British Guiana, might be "indentured labourers" without becoming slaves? No. But a class of people the most ignorant, the most strange, the most helpless, in all respects the most fit to become

slaves under the name of "indentured labourers." They are called Hill Coolies. The country from which they are to be imported, after being kidnapped, is the East Indies. In New South Wales the same apprehension of a want of labourers (which, as I have already said, the Noble Lord might have prevented by expending the emigration fund, instead of keeping it locked up in the public chest at Sydney) has led to a similar project for the importation of Hill Coolies. This attempt to establish a new kind of slavery was condemned by the late Governor, Sir R. Bourke, in a despatch now before the House. Should we not condemn the Noble Lord for having sanctioned a similar attempt in British Guiana? That new law of slavery—that piece of colonial legislation—will surely be repealed now that it has come to the knowledge of the British public. But will this set up the Noble Lord as a statesman qualified to save the industry, the whole productive power of the West Indies, from total overthrow in the year 1840?

The political prospects of the West Indies are not less gloomy than those which relate to productive and commercial industry. In the Chartered Colonies, above all, which possess local representation, is it to be believed that the two races—the masters and the slaves of yesterday—to-day perfectly equal as to political rights—will sit down peaceably together in the same Legislature? Will not the blacks, as they may easily do, seek to

obtain a majority in the local Parliament? And will the whites, the haughty masters of yesterday, quietly submit to what they will consider so deep a degradation as being ruled by their recently emancipated slaves! Let the question be answered by referring to the actual state of political opinion amongst the whites of Jamaica. If ever a colony was rebellious at heart—if ever a colony was in a state of dangerous excitement—this one is! The whole of the West Indies indeed, economically and politically, are in a most critical state. The state of the West Indies, having reference to 1840, calls especially for forethought, for precautionary measures. Are we to trust to the Noble Lord for such measures of forethought, of precaution? Or are we, so surely as we place any reliance on the Noble Lord's energetic sagacity, to wait quietly—nothing done, nothing proposed, nothing thought of—till 1840 is upon us? Sir, may I not say, that the Noble Lord has neglected to take, and seems incapable of taking, any precautions to render harmless the great revolution—economical, social, and political,—which must happen in the West Indies two years hence! Considering the near approach of 1840, is it fair—is it just—is it commonly humane—towards our fellow subjects in the West Indies, who, be it always remembered, have no representation in this House—to let the Noble Lord continue fast asleep at the head of Colonial affairs? According to the treatment of my motion

by the House will be the answer to this question. If the House decide uninfluenced by considerations altogether foreign to the subject, who can doubt of the result?

The House will, I trust, have observed that neither in referring to the dangerous condition of any Colony, nor in questioning the capacity of the Noble Lord to deal with the existing circumstances of our colonial empire, have I mentioned the subject of the colonial policy of this or any other Administration. That subject I conceive to be foreign to the question before the House. With this impression I should not, except for the purpose of correcting a misrepresentation as to myself, have even alluded, as I did just now, to the subject of colonial policy in the abstract. Neither general principles, nor particular measures founded upon this or that principle, have anything to do with my proposition as to the actual state of colonial affairs, and the incapacity of the present Colonial Minister. The questions which I have submitted to the House are questions of mere fact. I inquire not into the causes of the present critical state of colonial affairs. I have no concern on the present occasion with the opinions of the Noble Lord or of his colleagues, or of any other person, on the subject of colonial policy. Still less should I be willing to obtrude on the House any opinions of my own with respect to subjects, between which and the question at issue there is no kind of rela-

tion whatever. In proceeding, therefore, to say a few words on the condition of our North American provinces, I put aside altogether the differences between the Assembly of Lower Canada and the Colonial-office. I stop not to ask which has right or justice on its side—the Office or the Assembly. With a view to the motion before the House, I have not a word to say about the resolutions of last year, or the act of this year. Against both of those measures I spoke and voted at the time, and should be ready to do so again on a fitting occasion; but if both of those measures had had my strenuous support, instead of my most determined opposition, such a course would not in the least have precluded me from submitting my present motion to the House. I have the honour of addressing the House on a totally different question. And first, Sir, as to the Noble Lord's manner of carrying into effect the policy of the Government towards Lower Canada. Need I recur, Sir, to those wearisome despatches which have impressed upon the country at large a conviction of the Noble Lord's pre-eminent unfitness for the conduct of difficult affairs? Need I, following a Noble Earl in the other House of Parliament (Aberdeen), count over again the long list of promises forgotten—of assurances never fulfilled—of instructions which never arrived until it was too late—of excuses for leaving Lord Gosford without instructions—of postponements without a reason—

of apologies and pretexts for delay when promptitude was most requisite—of self-contradictions, hesitations—meaningless changes of purpose, and other proofs of an inveterate habit of doing nothing? “In fact,” said the Noble Earl, “the system that the Noble Lord went upon, was that of doing nothing.” Doing nothing reduced to a system! This system of the Noble Lord has much to answer for. Who will deny that it was the main cause of the revolt and bloodshed in which it ended? If the recent accounts from Lower Canada make it appear, as I think they do, that the policy of the Government towards that country has fewer or less determined enemies there, than was lately supposed, yet those favourable accounts cast still heavier blame on the Noble Lord’s extraordinary system; tending, at least, to show that the most ordinary degree of decision and promptitude would have prevented the revolt altogether. The easy suppression of the revolt, however, by no means establishes that the Colony is in so little a critical state as to be fit for the Noble Lord’s peculiar system. So again of Upper Canada. Does not that Colony require, particularly just now, from the head of our Colonial Government a system very different from that of the Noble Lord? Is it probable—is it possible—is it in the nature of things, that the Noble Lord should so far change his second nature as to conquer the habit of doing nothing? But it may be said the Government

of our North American provinces has been taken out of the hands of the Noble Lord, and confided to a Noble Earl (Durham) who possesses in an eminent degree the personal qualities in which the Noble Lord is most conspicuously deficient. I have heard this said, Sir, but cannot understand it. I readily acknowledge the statesmanlike qualities of the Noble Earl, whose personal character seems to qualify him, above most men, for the performance of difficult and arduous public functions. Let me acknowledge the very striking contrast between the habits of the Noble Earl and the system of the Noble Lord. But, what then? From whom is the Noble Earl to receive—from whom has he already received—instructions? To whom is he to make reports? Who is to bring before Parliament the legislative measures the Noble Earl may propose? Answer to all—the Noble Lord wedded to his system of doing nothing? Does it not therefore appear, not only foolish, but almost ridiculous, to make such a person as the Noble Earl subordinate to the Noble Lord? They had far better change places; for the system of the Noble Lord is one in which subordinates cannot well indulge, least of all under such a chief as the Noble Earl; and it is in the chief, the head of our Colonial department, that the qualities of diligence, forethought, judgment, activity, and firmness are most required.

Sir, I have detained the House too long, and

will trouble them with but a few words more. Hon. Members, far better acquainted than I can pretend to be, with the history of Parliament, will confirm me in saying that this motion is fully justified by precedent; but I will not rely at all on this justification. I rely wholly on the truth of my proposition, and the expediency of affirming it. This appears to me to be a case for which we ought to make a precedent, if there be none to direct us in providing a remedy for the evil. Whatever may be thought of the motion, the case, I will venture to say, is without precedent. Were our Colonies ever, since we established a central Government for them, in so critical a state before? When did so many and such grave questions press upon the attention of a Colonial Minister? Is there a single Member of the House who will say upon his conscience that the present Colonial Minister possesses any one, or is not deficient in all, of the qualities mentioned in the proposed address to the Crown? Sir, my proposition is true, and upon that I alone rely; for if such a proposition be true, who will deny the obligation upon us to provide an adequate remedy for the evil? Sir, instead of searching after precedents, I point to the millions of our fellow-subjects who are unrepresented in this House—to the great branches of domestic industry which depend upon the well-being of our Colonial empire—to New South Wales, sinking into a state of irreclaimable depravity, with its free emigration fund

locked up in the Government chest, and its oft-promised Constitution withheld year after year—to the Mauritius, with its 20,000 freemen held in bondage by the insolent and would-be rebel planters—to South Africa, almost denuded of its native inhabitants, distracted by factions who agree in nothing but their curses of the Colonial-office, and its horde of rebels gone forth into the wilderness to conquer an inheritance of oppression over the helpless natives—to the “white man’s grave,” that job of jobs, which is rejoicing in the recall of a reforming Governor—to the West Indies, bordering on the ruin of their industry, inventing a new slave trade with the sanction of the Noble Lord, in order to counteract the Noble Lord’s total neglect of the means which he himself has pointed out as necessary to preserve the use of capital in those fertile lands; grossly evading the Emancipation Act, after pocketing its enormous price; and fast approaching the time when, without a single precaution with a view to that strange event, 800,000 negro slaves will in one day acquire the same political rights as their masters of another race; and with the most important of those possessions in a state little short of open revolt;—and lastly, to the North American provinces, where open revolt has just been suppressed—where civil bloodshed has excited the passions of hatred and revenge—where a Constitution is suspended, and martial law is still in force, and where there is no prospect of peace

and contented allegiance, but in the prompt settlement of a great variety of questions of surpassing complexity and difficulty. I point to all these Colonies in a state of disorganization and danger ; and then to the interests at home, which depend, more or less, on the productiveness of Colonial industry—to Birmingham and Sheffield—to Leeds, Liverpool, and Glasgow, and to the great Colonial shipping port of London. This done, instead of searching after precedents, I would remind the House of the Noble Lord's system, as described by his immediate predecessor in office—the fatal system of doing nothing at all ! If truth and the public interest are to prevail, the House will surely accede to my motion, whether or not it be according to precedent.

One word more, and I shall no longer trespass upon the patience of the House. It has been suggested to me, that my motion would have been more likely to be carried if it had applied, not to a particular member of the government, but to the whole administration. For the following reasons, I have not listened to that suggestion. The subject relates strictly to the Colonial Department, and I wish to confine myself to the subject. It may be true that the whole Cabinet should be held responsible for the errors and defects of the Colonial-office—that may be a good constitutional principle, but I am not aware of it. Not being aware of it, I have pursued the plain and simple course of attributing

to the Colonial Minister alone his own errors and deficiencies. The other course—that of proposing a vote of want of confidence in the Ministry on account of the state of a single department—would have been far more agreeable to me in one respect, inasmuch as it would have relieved me from the suspicion (which however I trust that none who know me will entertain) of being actuated by personal hostility to Lord Glenelg. On that account alone I should have much preferred moving for a vote as respects the Cabinet; but I felt that my first duty was to place the subject before the House in the light best calculated to obtain their attention, and therefore have I confined to the Colonial Minister the proposal of a vote of censure for matters which are exclusively of a Colonial nature. I have very likely erred through inexperience of the usages of Parliament and the Constitution; but I have acted according to the best of my judgment, and throw myself upon the indulgence of the House. I conclude by moving, “That a humble address be presented to Her Majesty, respectfully expressing the opinion of this House that in the present critical state of many of Her Majesty’s foreign possessions in various parts of the world, it is essential to the well-being of Her Majesty’s Colonial empire, and of the many and important domestic interests which depend on the prosperity of the Colonies, that the Colonial Minister should be a person in whose diligence, forethought,

judgment, activity, and firmness, this House and the public may be able to place reliance ; and declaring, with all deference to the constitutional prerogatives of the Crown, that Her Majesty's present Secretary of State for the Colonies does not enjoy the confidence of this House, or of the country."

THE END.